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SUBJECT: Embassy Santiago Suggestions for Defamation of Religions
Issue

REF: A. STATE 128320; B. SANTIAGO 166; C. STATE 128322

¶1. (SBU) In response to Ref A query on engaging Chile on the question of defamation of religion, Embassy Santiago advises that Chile has already voted "no" along with the United States on the defamation of religion issue in the UNGA (Ref B). We believe that Washington has already found an effective way to reinforce Chile's position through the Secretary's letter to FM Fernandez and offer to send U.S. experts to discuss the matter with Chilean counterparts (Ref C).

¶2. (SBU) As a general proposition, Chile will take U.S. concerns into consideration and will look for opportunities to support us when that coincides with Chile's own interests. However, the Foreign Ministry currently has just 2-3 Santiago-based foreign policy professionals engaged on human rights issues. Therefore, Chile lacks the resources to simultaneously monitor the wide range of human right issues discussed in multilateral fora, engage with us on domestic and bilateral issues of interest to the United States, and absorb our numerous approaches to them on multilateral human rights issues.

¶3. (SBU) Thus, our challenge is to develop a strategy that responds both to Chile's willingness to work with us and their limited resources to do so. We suggest Washington to identify 2-3 issues in a given year where it would be most fruitful to engage with Chile, communicate those interests to Chile at the beginning of the relevant UNGA or other session, and focus subsequent engagement on those broad areas. Towards that end, putting U.S. and foreign experts and decisionmakers in direct contact with each other is critical. Those encounters are even more fruitful when the U.S. experts not only bring awareness of multilateral issues and U.S. objectives, but have the regional experience to understand how those issues mesh with regional and Chilean priorities as well.
SIMONS